



Principal's Report to School Council

January 20, 2026

School Operational Update

Update on Portables Heating and Cooling

For the past five years, we have been dealing with ongoing issues related to the furnaces in our portables, including repeated concerns about gas leaks and heating and cooling system failures. Each time issues arose, we contacted Facilities, and while short term fixes were often put in place, the underlying problems have persisted. This has understandably been a frustrating process for our school community, and we have continued to raise significant safety concerns and advocate strongly for a more permanent solution.

We are now hopeful that our repeated calls to action and safety concerns have been heard. CBE Projects has officially taken on this issue, and we have been informed that the furnaces in the portables will be repaired or replaced over Spring Break. Immediate safety concerns have already been addressed, and we have also been assured that cooling issues will be resolved in the coming months.

We appreciate your patience, as well as that of our students and staff, as we work through these long-standing facility challenges and will continue to advocate to ensure our learning environments are safe and comfortable for all students and staff.

Staffing Updates

- Mr. Crabbe has now returned to work full time.
- Ms. Laser will remain with us until at least April, continuing in her current role.
- Ms. Poyhia is scheduled to return full time at the end of this month. Upon Ms. Poyhia's return, Ms. Berndtsson will be leaving us. It has truly been a pleasure having Ms. Berndtsson with us, and we are very grateful for the support she has provided to our students and staff.
- We are actively looking to hire a part time teacher to support our EAL students. This additional staffing would allow classroom teachers to provide more targeted instruction to other learners while ensuring our EAL students receive more direct, specialized support. At this time, we are struggling to find a candidate with the appropriate expertise who is also willing to take on a part time role. This remains a priority area for us operationally.

School Development Reporting 2026

Literacy Goal

Across Grades 6 to 9, our literacy data points to a consistent and coherent area of focus related to reading comprehension and higher order thinking skills. While

there are grade specific differences in the precise skills assessed, a clear pattern emerges around students' ability to identify key ideas, interpret meaning, draw inferences, and synthesize information across texts. These foundational to advanced comprehension skills form a developmental continuum, and the instructional responses outlined by each grade team are intentionally aligned to scaffold student learning along that continuum. Collectively, this work reflects a coordinated, school wide approach to strengthening deep reading comprehension and supporting improved student achievement over time.

Grade 6

Grade 6 is focusing on main idea as a foundational comprehension skill, given its direct link to summarizing and distinguishing between a retell and a summary. Teachers are using short nonfiction texts and explicit lessons that emphasize contextual, visual, and structural features to help students identify key ideas. This work is supported through regular STARS bell ringers, alternating with *Wordly Wise*, to build consistent, incremental practice.

Grade 7

Grade 7 is targeting drawing conclusions and making inferences, based on low performance in this area on the CARs assessment. Teachers will embed inference practice into the novel study, using text excerpts and scaffolded sentence starters to help students identify evidence and draw conclusions. This approach is designed to strengthen higher order thinking and move students beyond surface level comprehension.

Grade 8

Grade 8 is focusing on summarizing and finding main idea, recognizing that these skills go hand in hand. Instruction will begin with summarizing, supported by short lessons and daily bell ringers using the Brain Waves booklet. This strategy provides structured, repeated practice and allows teachers to monitor progress through built in assessments.

Grade 9

Grade 9 is addressing synthesizing ideas, the lowest area on the PAT assessment. Teachers embedded explicit instruction on theme within the novel study *Scythe*, requiring students to create theme statements supported by evidence. Weekly "Music Monday" tasks further reinforce mood, tone, theme, and literary devices, helping students integrate ideas across texts in an engaging and meaningful way.

Math Goal will be reported on next month.

Looking Ahead: Academic Rigor and Final Exams

As noted, we are continuing to focus on creating a rigorous and robust academic program for our students. While there are known limitations to PATs, they do provide us with useful information about instructional strengths and gaps when students and families take them seriously.



To further support this culture of academic responsibility, we are implementing final exams in Mathematics and English Language Arts across all grades (7 & 8). These final exams serve several important purposes:

- They help normalize cumulative review and reinforce the importance of sustained effort across an entire semester.
- They build students' test taking stamina and confidence in preparation for PATs and future diploma exams.
- They provide additional, meaningful data for teachers to inform instruction and intervention.
- They reinforce the message that all assessments matter and that effort and preparation are essential parts of learning.

Ultimately, final exams support both academic rigor and accountability, while helping students develop the habits and resilience needed for long term academic success.

School Events, Athletics & Extracurricular

School Events

- Winter Festival of Learning is coming up this Thursday at 6:30 pm.
- Semester 2 begins on January 28, with students switching to their new option classes.
- Semester 1 report cards will be available at the end of February. Families are encouraged to regularly check PowerSchool, read school communications, and reach out to teachers with any questions or concerns. Report cards should never come as a surprise. Teachers will be in contact with families if students are not meeting basic grade level expectations.

Athletics

- Volleyball teams have been selected.
- Games start next week.

Extracurricular Clubs

- Principal's Advisory has been selected and has met for the first time this year.
- Weekly lunch clubs are in full effect.
- Rehearsals for mainstage production of *Frozen* is in full effect as well.

